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50 new sirens added to statewide Tsunami Siren Network

Fifty new tsunami sirens installed by the Washington Emergency Management Division over the past two years will help make the coast a safer place. The new All-Hazard Alert Broadcast (AHAB) sirens are filling critical gaps in the tsunami warning infrastructure and helped complete the statewide tsunami siren network.

Without the funding from the Washington state Legislature and the hard work and dedication of partners across Western Washington, completing the siren network could have taken another 20 years.

There are now 122 sirens on the Washington coast, which are run and maintained by the state.

The AHAB tsunami sirens are intended to act as an outdoor tsunami alerting method for people and communities on or near the beach who may not otherwise have access to other official alerting methods via radio, TV or their smartphones. This is especially helpful for [“distant” tsunami events](#) from places like Alaska, Japan or Southeast Asia. The tsunami sirens are NOT meant to be heard inside. Residents should invest in NOAA Weather Radios to hear tsunami alerts while inside their homes.

The Washington Emergency Management Division coordinated with state, tribal and local partners to identify and fill the tsunami siren gaps for high risk communities. Local partners may decide on their own to add more sirens as the years progress.

“This life-saving project brought together state agencies, tribal, county and city emergency management as well as other important stakeholders to ensure Washington’s coastal communities can be alerted in the event of a tsunami warning,” said Maximilian Dixon, the geologic hazards supervisor for the state Emergency Management Division.

Dixon says that the state’s attention now will be to improve tsunami evacuation route signage, as well as working with local officials on vertical tsunami evacuation structures.

New siren locations

The 50 new tsunami sirens have been installed at the following places:

CLALLAM COUNTY – 7 SIRENS

Makah Tribal Housing Area
Makah Tribe, Hobuck Campground and RV Resort
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Blyn
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Dungeness
San Juan Vista Community
Sekiu, Mason's Olson Resort
City of Port Angeles

WHATCOM COUNTY – 5 SIRENS
Lummi Nation, Sandy Point
Lummi Nation, Lummi Bay Market
Blaine, Semiahmoo Spit Marina
Birch Bay State Park
Fairhaven Historic District, Bellingham

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY – 13 SIRENS
Shoalwater Bay Tribe, Tokeland
City of Aberdeen, West Hunley Street
City of Aberdeen, Bishop Athletic Complex
City of Aberdeen, Lafayette Street
City Hoquiam, Queen Avenue
Grayland Beach State Park
Ocean City State Park
Twin Harbors State Park
City of Cosmopolis
Ocean Shores, Central Water Reservoir
Ocean Shores, Vacuum Pump Station #6
Ocean Shores, Vacuum Pump Station #6
City of Westport

ISLAND COUNTY – 7 SIRENS
Dugulla Bay, Whidbey Island
Oak Harbor Marina, Whidbey Island
Lagoon Point, Whidbey Island
Iverson Beach, Camino Island
Driftwood Shores, Camino Island
West Beach Road, Oak Harbor
Keystone, Driftwood County Park

JEFFERSON COUNTY – 1 SIREN
Port Townsend Marina

PACIFIC COUNTY – 3 SIRENS
Ilwaco Marina
Long Beach Peninsula, Pacific Park, Cranberry Beach Road
Long Beach Peninsula, Pacific Park, 145th Place

SKAGIT COUNTY – 11 SIRENS

Swinomish Tribe, Shelter Bay Marina
Swinomish Tribe, Tribal Casino
Swinomish Tribal Fish Company
Samish Indian Nation, Fidalgo Bay Resort
City of Anacortes Skate Park
City of La Conner Fire Station
City of Blanchard
Samish Island Community Center
City of Anacortes, Skyline Marina
Edison Fire Station
City of Anacortes, Treatment Plant

SNOHOMISH COUNTY – 3 SIRENS
Port of Everett Marina Park
Port of Everett
City of Edmonds

Why Sirens?

All 3,000 miles of Washington's coastline are at risk of tsunamis. For local tsunamis, those caused by nearby earthquakes, the groundshaking is your warning that a tsunami could be on the way. However, for distant tsunamis, those caused by earthquakes in other parts of the world, there is no groundshaking to warn you about the approaching danger. Tsunami sirens therefore play an integral role in ensuring Washington's public receives ample warning for distant events. The sirens have an audible range of approximately 1 mile, though this varies depending on environmental factors like topography, wind direction and physical barriers. The pole-mounted voice/tone sirens are also topped with a blue light for the hard of hearing. The sirens are not intended to be heard indoors.

Siren Testing

The siren system is tested on the first Monday of every month at noon. The sirens play the Westminster Chimes followed by an audio message in English and Spanish. The sirens are also tested once a year with the actual tsunami warning wail sound on the third Thursday in October in conjunction with the Great Washington ShakeOut earthquake and tsunami drill.

Know Your Tsunami Warning Signs

If you hear the siren wailing sound, or you receive a tsunami warning through your smartphone, TV, radio, or other alerting method, immediately follow the closest tsunami evacuation route inland or to high ground. This is your warning that a tsunami is approaching and you need to evacuate the inundation zone as soon as possible.

If you are on the coast and you feel ground shaking, drop, cover and hold on to protect yourself. When the shaking stops, immediately follow the closest tsunami evacuation route inland or to high ground. Do not wait to hear a tsunami siren or to receive an official tsunami alert – the shaking is your warning that a tsunami may be on its way.

To learn more about the AHAB tsunami siren network, and how you can prepare yourself and your loved ones for a tsunami, visit www.mil.wa.gov/tsunami.

